

O'Brien Block -- 123 W. First St.  
Oswego  
Oswego County  
New York

HABS No. NY-244 E

HABS  
NY,  
38-Oswego,  
2 E -

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

HABS  
NY  
38-08008  
2E-

HISTORICAL AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

O'BRIEN BLOCK 123 WEST FIRST STREET

Location: 123 West First Street East side of First Street  
between Seneca and Cayuga, Oswego, New York

Present Owner: Neal O'Brien Lumber Company

Present Occupant: The building is presently unoccupied

Present Use: After the Neal O'Brien Lumber Company moved to  
its new quarters in 1970, the building has been  
rented, primarily for storage, most recently for a  
short period to the local Agway store.

Statement of

Significance: This building, part of the block between Cayuga  
and Seneca, was in the heart of the pre-Civil  
War commercial district in Oswego. These re-  
maining buildings in the block comprise the last  
commercial buildings of the pre-Civil War era  
still standing in Oswego (with the exception of  
the Stone and Willett store which is on the  
National Register of Historic Places).

Part I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: 1858. Truman Wiman and James M. Hart  
purchased this property and an additional 32' directly  
south of this (125) in 1849. For several years the  
assessment for both parcels was combined. A jump in  
the valuation from \$6,500 in 1857 to \$11,000 in 1858  
would indicate that a building was erected somewhere  
on the property. When the properties were split again in  
1861 for evaluation purposes, the valuation at 123  
was 2½ times the evaluation at 125. From this we can  
conclude that the building was at 123. The more elabo-  
rate architectural features of this buildings compared  
to the simpler feature of the others (109-121) typical  
of 1830 - 50 architecture, would also support a later  
construction date.
2. Architect: Unknown
3. Original and subsequent owners:

The building is located on part of lot 9, block 17.  
The property originally belonged to the Haganin fam-  
ily but will be followed here from the ownership of  
Lucius B. Crocker in 1847.

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- 1849 Oeed dated 5/1/49 and recorded 6/30/1849 in Book 51 of Deeds, page 285 conveys property from Lucius B. Crocker to James M. Hart and Truman Wiman, consideration \$3,500. (Entire lot to Water Street 100' deep).
- 1877 Oeed dated 7/12/1877 and recorded 7/28/1877 in Book 154 of Deeds, page 486, conveys land at sheriff's sale to Mutual Life Insurance Company of New York, consideration \$4,000.
- 1894 Covenant vs Grantor deed dated 12/22/1894 and recorded 12/27/1894 in Book 218 of Deeds, Albert N. Radcliffe and Chauncey Place, consideration \$3,000.
- 1895 Bargain and Sale deed dated 1/29/1895 and recorded 12/3/1913 in Book 288 of Oeeds, page 249 conveys property to the Oswego Tool Company, consideration \$3,000.
- 1919 Warranty Oeed dated 9/30/1919 and recorded 10/3/1919 in Book 313 of Deeds, page 323 conveys property to the Mellamalt Company, Inc. consideration \$1.00 and costs. Property immediately mortgaged to Oswego City Savings as security for \$3,000. Recorded 10/3/1919 in Book 270 of Mortgages, page 548. Mortgage discharged 1/28/1925.
- 1924- Property conveyed through a series of Warranty  
1925 Oeeds to William U. Becker (Book 338, page 44), to Haftan Realty Corp. (Book 337, page 288), to Guila R. Dehli (Book 337, page 499).
- 1925 Property mortgaged to Oswego City Savings Bank as security for \$3,000, dated 3/14/1925 and recorded in Book 295 of Mortgages, page 155, Warranty deed dated 12/15/1925 and recorded 1/16/26 conveys property to Oora Gould, Book 342 of Deeds, page 203, 2nd mortgage on property to Pierson H. Gould as security for \$4,000 dated 12/23/1925 and recorded 12/26/1925 in Book 297 of Mortgages, page 355.
- 1927 City Savings forecloses mortgages 7/9/1927. Property conveyed by Warranty deed dated

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11/26/1927 and recorded 12/13/1927 in Book  
351 of Deeds, page 568 to Neal-O'Brien Lumber  
Company, consideration \$3,500 .

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure

James M.Hart and John J.Hart were in the dry goods  
business on the East Side of Oswego for several  
years before James, in partnership with Jerome  
Dutcher, started another dry goods business on the  
West Side in 1847 at 117 West First Street. James  
Hart served as First Ward Alderman in 1849.

In 1858, Mr. Hart, in partnership with Truman Wiman  
opened a new dry goods and grocery store at 123 West  
First Street which was in existence until around  
1863. At this time, Cowles, Scott and Titus took over  
the business, but Hart still owned the property. In  
keeping with the history of the rest of the block,  
as the prime commercial area moved further south on  
West First Street the property was sold at Sheriff's  
sale in 1877 to the Mutual Life Insurance Co. of  
New York. At the turn of the century, it was owned  
by the Oswego Tool Company, manufacturer of tools and  
small machinery. The property was mortgaged frequently  
by its several owners during the 1920's and was finally  
purchased by the Neal O'Brien Lumber Company in  
1927. The O'Brien family is still prominent and prosperous  
in Oswego.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Bibliography:

Churchill, John C., LL.D. Landmarks of Oswego  
County D. Mason & Company, Publishers 1895

Finn, Leo Old Shipping Days in Oswego  
Oswego County Board of Supervisors 1972

City Directories

Tax Assessment Records

County Deed and Mortgage Records

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